

Message Text

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FM AMEMBASSY BANGKOK

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AMCONSUL UDORN

UNCLAS BANGKOK 4408

E.O. 11652: N/A

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SUBJECT: TRANSPORT OF PAROLED REFUGEES FROM THAILAND TO USA

REFERENCE: (A) BANGKOK 3255 (B) BANGKOK 3924

1. PER REFTTEL (B) DISCUSSIONS WERE HELD BETWEEN ICEM/BANGKOK AND EMBASSY REFUGEE SECTION FEB 23 AND 24 IN REFERENCE TO OUT-PROCESSING PROCEDURES FOR REFUGEES AUTHORIZED FOR MOVEMENT TO THE US. AN INFORMAL PROPOSAL WAS SET FORTH ON FEB 23 TO ICEM/BANGKOK TO INVESTIGATE THE FEASIBILITY OF ICEM ASSUMING OUT-PROCESSING RESPONSIBILITIES PRESENTLY HANDLED BY EMBASSY BANGKOK.

2. THE PROPOSAL SET FORTH IS AS FOLLOWS:

A. ICEM WOULD TAKE RESPONSIBILITY FOR EACH REFUGEE CASE AS SOON AS SPONSORSHIP VERIFIED FOR REFUGEE WITH A-NUMBER. ICEM WILL CONTACT REFUGEE TO SEE IF SPONSORSHIP ACCEPTABLE AND MAKE INITIAL TRAVEL ARRANGEMENTS FROM REFUGEE CAMP TO TRANSIT CENTER.

B. ICEM WOULD COORDINATE MOVEMENT OF THE REFUGEE WITH THE ASSISTANCE OF UNHCR AND RTG/MOI DIRECTLY FROM THE CAMP/ TO TRANSIT CENTER EITHER UDORN (IF UDORN IS DEVELOPED AS A TRANSIT CENTER) OR BANGKOK. ICEM WOULD BE RESPONSIBLE ON BEHALF OF

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CENTER) OR BANGKOK. ICEM WOULD BE RESPONSIBLE ON BEHALF OF

USG FOR COSTS OF LODGING AND/OR SUBSISTENCE REQUIREMENTS IF NEEDED OF THOSE IN TRANSIT BETWEEN THE TIME THEY LEAVE THE REFUGEE CAMP AND THE TIME OF DEPARTURE TO THE US. ICEM WOULD THEN INSURE THAT PROPER MEDICAL SCREENING IS EXECUTED FOR ALL REFUGEES AT EITHER UDORN OR BANGKOK TRANSIT CENTERS.

C. UPON COMPLETION OF MEDICAL EXAMINATION, ICEM WOULD COORDINATE THE MOVEMENT OF THE REFUGEE FROM EITHER UDORN OR BANGKOK TO DON MUANG AIRPORT IN BANGKOK (AS PRESENTLY HANDLED, ICEM WOULD CONTINUE TO ACT AS TICKETING AGENT). AS PRESENTLY PLANNED, REFUGEES WOULD BE TRANSPORTED BY BUS TO DON MUANG. IT SHOULD BE NOTED THAT OPTION 1, REFTTEL (B) APPEARS TO BE THE MOST FEASIBLE METHOD FOR TRANSPORTING REFUGEES AT THIS TIME BECAUSE, ACCORDING TO ICEM, IT WILL BE CHEAPER (WITH 50 PER CENT REDUCTION IN AIR FARES FOR REFUGEES ON COMMERCIAL FLIGHTS) THAN BY CHARTER. FYI THERE IS A GUARANTEE MADE BY PAN AM/ AIR SIAM TO ICEM THAT 100 SEATS PER DAY COULD BE BLOCKED FOR REFUGEES. ICEM WOULD MAKE ARRANGEMENTS FOR OVERNIGHT LODGING AT DON MUANG AS REQUIRED. THIS COST WILL BE REIMBURSED BY USG. REFUGEES WOULD THEN BE BOARDED FOR MOVEMENT TO THE US AS SOON AS POSSIBLE AFTER ARRIVAL AT DON MUANG.

3. CORCOS, ICEM AREA REPRESENTATIVE IN BANGKOK, HAS SOUNDED OUT ICEM/GENEVA ON THE ABOVE PROPOSAL AND THE RESPONSE IS POSITIVE FOR ICEM TO ACT AS THE TRAVEL AND OUT-PROCESSING COORDINATOR FOR THE AMERICAN REFUGEE PROGRAM.

4. NECESSARY PERSONNEL REQUIREMENTS ENVISIONED BY ICEM/BANGKOK ARE AS FOLLOWS: ONE ICEM PHYSICIAN TO SUPERVISE MEDICAL SCREENING. (IT IS BELIEVED THAT THE BULK OF THE MEDICAL STAFF WOULD CONSIST OF THAI OR FOREIGN VOLAG PHYSICIANS, ALTHOUGH A DEFINITIVE STAFFING PROPOSAL HAS NOT BEEN DEVELOPED AT THIS TIME). AT LEAST ONE ICEM OFFICIAL WOULD ALSO BE REQUIRED TO COORDINATE THE ENTIRE OUT-PROCESSING SCHEME. IT IS UNDERSTOOD BY ICEM THAT ALL PERMANENT AND LOCAL HIRE ICEM PERSONNEL REQUIRED TO EXECUTE TRAVEL AND OUT-PROCESSING ACTIVITIES DESCRIBED ABOVE WOULD BE FUNDED BY THE USG ON A REIMBURSABLE BASIS. ICEM CONTEMPLATES LOCAL HIRE TO FILL MOST PERSONNEL NEEDS.

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5. EMBASSY BANGKOK BELIEVES THAT THE ASSISTANCE OF ICEM AS OUT-PROCESSING COORDINATOR IS ESSENTIAL TO EXPEDITE MOVEMENT OF LARGE NUMBERS OF REFUGEES IN THE EVEN THE NEW PAROLE AUTHORITY IS GRANTED BY CONGRESS. EMBASSY WOULD APPRECIATE ASAP DEPARTMENT'S VIEWS OF THIS PROPOSED EXPANDED ROLE FOR ICEM.

6. THIS CABLE HAS BEEN REVIEWED BY ICEM/BANGKOK AND IT IS

REQUESTED ON THEIR BEHALF THAT ALL REPEAT ALL COSTS INCURRED
IN THIS EXPANDED ROLE OF ICEM ARE TO BE COVERED BY ICEM ON A
REIMBURSABLE BASIS BY THE USG.
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